



Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk (860)441-6640
Town Manager
(860)441-6630

Meeting Minutes

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Natalie B. Billing, Representatives Karin Adams, Jean-Claude Ambroise, Joe Baril, Nancy E. Barnhart, Alicia Bauer, Nancy E. Beckwith, Laurie Kim Briggs, Genevieve Cerf, Michael Collins, Warren T. Cooper, Nancy S. Driscoll, Syma Ebbin, June Evered, Peter Fairbank, Melissa M. Finlayson, Irene B. Garagliano, Robert Garcia, Patrice Granatosky, Dolores Harrell, Wendy L. Hellekson, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, James Loughlin, Lisa M. Luck, Jackie Massett, Carole McCarthy, Richard Metayer, Betsy Moukawsher, Scott Newsome, Deborah Peruzzotti, Kevin Power, Betty A. Prochaska, Don Pratt, Jack Sebastian, Jennifer Smuts, Eleanor Steere, Joan Steinfeld, Irma Streeter, Mark Svencer, Cheryl Tilney and Robert A. Warn

Wednesday, April 29, 2009

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING

A. ROLL CALL

Moderator Natalie Billing called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

27 members were present, and a quorum was declared.

The Moderator reported that Reps. Cerf, Fairbank, Garagliano, Garcia and Peruzzotti called to say they are unable to attend this meeting.

Members Present: Moderator Billing, Rep. Adams, Rep. Ambroise, Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Beckwith, Rep. Briggs, Rep. Collins, Rep. Cooper, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Ebbin, Rep. Evered, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Luck, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Moukawsher, Rep. Power, Rep. Pratt, Rep. Prochaska, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Svencer and Rep. Warn
Members Absent: Rep. Cerf, Rep. Fairbank, Rep. Finlayson, Rep. Garagliano, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Hellekson, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Metayer, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Peruzzotti, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Steere and Rep. Tilney

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, School Superintendent Paul Kadri, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds Wes Greenleaf, Board of Education Chairman Beverly Washington, Finance Director Sal Pandolfo, Mayor Watson, Town Councilors Schmidt and O'Beirne, Deputy Town Clerk Janet Downs and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The members observed a moment of silence followed by the Salute to the Flag led by Rep. Beckwith.

C. CALL OF THE MEETING

The Deputy Town Clerk read the Call of the Meeting.

2009-0066

Annual RTM Budget Meeting

RESOLUTION SETTING RTM BUDGET MEETING DATE ON THE 2009-2010 ANNUAL TOWN BUDGET

WHEREAS, Section 9.3.1 of the Groton Town Charter requires that the Town Council determine the date for the annual budget meeting of the Representative Town Meeting, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Annual Budget Meeting of the Representative Town Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 29, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex, Community Room 1, 134 Groton Long Point Road, Groton, Connecticut.

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

Earl Patterson, 363 Ridgewood Drive, Mystic stated he was speaking on behalf of his wife Nora

Patterson. Ms. Patterson requests that the RTM not reduce the Education budget. She feels that the community has a duty to provide the best education that the Town can afford. She does not want to see summer school or other valuable programs eliminated because it would be a struggle to restore them. She stated that the schools only have a brief opportunity to have a positive influence on students. She urges the RTM to support the Education budget the best we can.

Julie Maisch, 60 Colony Road, thanked the RTM for past support for the Eastern Connecticut Symphony. She urged members to continue the support for \$3,000 as approved by the Council. She mentioned that many Groton residents attend on a routine basis.

Laura Heller, 19 Packer Lane, Mystic, spoke in support of the Board of Education (BOE) budget. She supports the 2.6% increase for this budget. She feels that current class sizes are large enough. Ms. Heller noted that her child's class size is 26 students, including one special needs child. She believes that full-day kindergarten should be offered in all schools. She feels that good schools are very important to entice new residents and families to our community.

Mariellen French, 12 Little Gull Lane, Mystic, stated that education is important because it influences the next generation of residents, but she urged members to consider the taxpayers who elected them. She noted that she pays \$10.00 per day to live in the Town of Groton. She urged members not to ask residents to make up the difference due to the decline in State and Federal aid. She requested the RTM members not to approve expenditures that taxpayers cannot afford.

Susan Townsley, 2 Foxhill Road, Old Saybrook, spoke as a representative of Literacy Volunteers of Eastern Connecticut. She thanked Groton for its past financial support and requested continued support for the Agency. She clarified the mission of the program which trains volunteers to teach citizens to read, speak and write English. She noted that Groton has a number of tutors and students. She feels this program benefits everyone in all the communities in our region.

Wanda Tillman, 925 River Road, Mystic, feels it is most important to support the arts in tough economic times when businesses are cutting support. She asked for the continued support for \$3,000 for the Eastern Connecticut Symphony concerts. She mentioned that the BOE budget has cut funding for student attendance at the Young People's Concert and would like the RTM to consider restoring those funds.

Kevin Trejo, 536 Shennecossett Road, stated he is content with the Council recommendations for the BOE and Town budgets. He feels that the budget has been formulated with great restraint by the BOE and Town officials. He asked for no further reductions by the RTM.

Lisa Tess, 84 Ensign Drive, Mystic, feels that the BOE and the Town Manager each presented sound budgets. She believes that School Superintendent Kadri is very innovative and is dealing well with the administrative challenges that were created by the current economic downturn and numerous mandates affecting the Education budget. She feels that the Council's reduction to the Education budget could be lived with for the short term but requested no further reduction. She asked that there be no teacher layoffs, give-backs or reductions of programs. She urged members to approve the Council figure for the Education budget.

Katrina Fitzgerald, 12 Overlook Avenue, Mystic, is actively involved in both Fitch High School and Cutler Middle School. She reported speaking with many parents who are worried about the impact on their children of the elimination of many current programs. She requested that no further reductions be made to the Education budget.

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

Moderator Billing reported receiving two emails from Ed Johnson. She stated that Mr. Johnson would like the RTM to consider a reduction to the Groton Long Point Police account. The Moderator introduced two new RTM members, Karin Adams from District 1, and Robert

Warn from District 7.

2009-0074 FYE 2009 Fourth Quarter Transfers

This matter was Referred to the RTM Finance Committee, due back on June 17, 2009.

F. BUDGET UPDATE/DISCUSSION

The Town Manager provided details about Council actions for the FYE 2010 budget. He provided information on the status of the State budget and revenue projections. He noted that he will provide an update on revenue when it is confirmed in Hartford and recommended that members not react to daily news articles about the State's current or proposed budget revenues. In response to the Moderator, the Manager stated the Council has decided to maintain a 7.5% Fund Balance.

Superintendent of Schools Paul Kadri thanked the citizens for their comments. He provided a recap on how the budget was built and items that influence the budget. He mentioned that mandated and contractual obligations are items that neither the BOE or he have control over. He stated he has three goals: to maintain critical priorities, to assess needs and to support staff to maintain confidence and morale. He feels that the 2.6% increase approved by the Council for the Education budget is respectful. He noted that any less would be unhealthy and could not be sustained in future budgets. He acknowledged that he is building community trust and that agreement between the BOE and Town Council is fostering this trust. He emphasized that he is looking toward the next several years to sustain the Education budget and hoping that by the fourth year revenues will have increased so that the budget can increase. He feels that the next three years will be challenging and hopes to be able avoid any huge holes in the Education budget that cannot be restored quickly.

Moderator Billing asked Rep. Power to assume the role of Moderator Pro Tempore so that she could comment on the budget.

Rep. Billing feels that \$2.5 million should be cut from the Manager's budget. She will be supporting all the reductions made by the Council which total about \$1.2 million. She noted that she will support the reductions proposed by RTM committees which total about \$400,000. She stated she will not support proposed restorations by committees for outside libraries or the City of Groton Police. Rep. Billing believes the following issues need to be addressed: the underfunding by the Town of Stonington of the Mystic & Noank Library, the Mystic Ambulance and pump-out boat services. She would like gradual, annual reductions to those contributions. Rep. Billing feels that the RTM needs to speak out about the inefficiency of having three police departments. She believes the Town can no longer afford to contribute 30% to the Groton Long Point (GLP) police services and 50% to the City of Groton police services. Rep. Billing is less willing to continue to fund a separate dispatch function in the City of Groton when the Town Dispatch Center is well equipped and staffed.

Rep. Billing encouraged members to resist the temptation to vote for any restorations and support the additional reductions recommended by the RTM committees.

The Moderator adjourned the meeting until Monday, May 4, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Budget Session - Monday May 4, 2009

Moderator Natalie Billing called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

27 members were present, and a quorum was declared. (Reps. Ambroise, Collins, and Smuts arrived later.)

The Moderator reported that Reps. Barnhart, Briggs, Garagliano, Hubbard, Luck, Massett, and Streeter called to say they are unable to attend this meeting and Rep. Ambroise will be late.

Members Present: Moderator Billing, Rep. Adams, Rep. Ambroise, Rep. Baril, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Beckwith, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Collins, Rep. Cooper, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Ebbin, Rep. Evered, Rep. Fairbank, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Moukawsher, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Peruzzotti, Rep. Power, Rep. Pratt, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Svencer and Rep. Warn
Members Absent: Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Briggs, Rep. Finlayson, Rep. Garagliano, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Hellekson, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Luck, Rep. Massett, Rep. Metayer, Rep. Prochaska, Rep. Steere, Rep. Streeter and Rep. Tilney

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Sal Pandolfo, Administrative Services Director Doug Ackerman, Human Services Director Marge Fondulas, Groton Public Library Director Betty Ann Reiter, Bill Memorial Library Director Hali Keeler, Mystic & Noank Library Director Lois Hiller, Planning & Development Director Mike Murphy and staff, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox, and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

Moderator Billing reviewed the procedures for amendments, caucuses, conduct, debate and decorum to be followed by all members.

G. COMMITTEE REPORTS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

Chairman Peruzzotti read the minutes of the meetings held on April 16 and April 20, 2009.

(Minutes are on file.)

A Motion to accept the minutes was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Beckwith and so voted unanimously.

(Reps. Ambroise and Smuts arrived at this time.)

Account 1046 - Planning & Development Services

A MOTION for \$1,268,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Fairbank.

In response to Rep. Newsome, Mr. Murphy explained why the Project Manager position is budgeted in the Planning Department account, and the elimination of the Planner I position.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$1,252,410 was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Moukawsher.

Rep. Granatosky's rationale is to cut contributions to the Fleet Fund and eliminate computer replacement funding this year to reduce the budget without crippling departments.

Rep. Sebastian stated that the committee feels that expenditures need to be cut and he feels reducing staff is a way to achieve it. He believes a part-time planner could get the job done. He feels that the current down economy has reduced the workload for this department.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$1,228,000 was made by Rep. Ebbin, seconded by Rep. Sebastian.

Rep. Ebbin's believes it is not the right time to add new staff and that existing staff should be able to handle any increase in the work load. She suggested that a collaboration with the Town of Stonington for a construction project manager be investigated.

Rep. Steinfeld disclosed that her husband serves on the Planning Commission. She asked staff to comment on the Project Manager position and workload.

Mr. Murphy outlined the upcoming projects for FYE 2010, and mentioned the backlog of inspections. He distributed a handout that provides details on specific projects.

The vote on the amendment of \$1,228,000 was defeated 8 in favor, 19 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Adams, Cerf, Cooper, Ebbin, Granatosky, Moukawsher, Pratt, and Sebastian.)

The Town Manager addressed the members in response to Rep. Granatosky's rationale for the first amendment. He feels that it would be a mistake to reduce fleet funding and eliminate computer replacement funding.

Rep. Granatosky responded to the Town Manager stating that during a caucus members decided

that it would be better to reduce contributions to the Fleet Fund for one year rather than eliminate jobs. She feels this is a painless reduction.

Rep. Cerf supports the amendment. She believes that the Town should use vehicles longer and should reduce the Fleet Fund across the board.

The vote on the amendment of \$1,252,410 was defeated, 12 in favor, 15 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Cerf, Cooper, Ebbin, Evered, Fairbank, Granatosky, Loughlin, Moukawsher, Peruzzotti, Power, Sebastian and Billing.)

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$1,258,000 was made by Rep. Cerf, seconded by Rep. Sebastian.

Rep. Cerf stated that this figure represents the proposed committee reduction plus \$10,000 reduction to the Fleet Fund and \$0 contribution to the Computer Replacement Fund.

The Town Manager explained the process for reviewing job vacancies. He stated it was his decision to move the school construction manager into the Planning Department. He feels this will benefit the Town in the long run due to the number of future projects. He stated that many reimbursements require such a position and that the Town will save money by providing an in-house staff position rather than hiring an outside firm. He noted that if members want to reduce the Fleet Fund and Computer Replacement Fund, he recommends that it be done for all departments.

Republican Floor Leader Kevin Power requested a recess for a Republican caucus.

The Moderator recessed the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 8:35 p.m.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$1,183,000 was made by Rep. Warn, seconded by Rep. Sebastian.

Rep. Warn stated that he believes that his constituents are against adding staff and feels that this will force the department to be more efficient.

Rep. Collins stated he will not support the second amendment. He feels that it will be detrimental to the businesses located in downtown Mystic with the number of upcoming projects.

Rep. Sebastian supports the second amendment and feels that \$1.1 million should be enough to operate the Planning Department.

Rep. Warn stated that the Planning Director should prioritize staff as needed to the various projects.

Rep. Evered will not support the second amendment. She feels that the requested level of Planning staff is needed to handle the immense amount of paperwork that is required when dealing with the Federal and State government for reimbursements and grants.

The vote on the amendment of \$1,183,000 was defeated 4 in favor, 23 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Cerf, Cooper, Sebastian and Warn.)

Discussion on the amended figure of \$1,258,000 continued.

In response to Rep. Ambrose, the Town Manager reminded members of the 25% reduction to the Fleet Fund made last year. He mentioned that the funds were not replaced this year. He cautioned that the next several years will not be easier and explained the concept of creating the Fleet Fund to absorb yearly fluctuations in accounts when large vehicle equipment replacement is needed.

Rep. Beckwith supports the committee figure. She feels that reducing fleet funding will create a public safety issue.

Rep. Smuts agreed with Rep. Beckwith and the Town Manager.

Rep. Cerf will support reductions to the Fleet Fund. She stated that the Town has been lucky up to this point with little impact felt from the worsening economy and has suffered no job losses.

Rep. Bauer will not support the reductions. She feels it is important to budget over time for major purchases.

The vote on the amendment of \$1,258,000 was defeated 12 in favor, 15 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Adams, Cerf, Cooper, Ebbin, Granatosky, Loughlin, Moukawsher, Peruzzotti, Power, Sebastian, Warn and Billing.)

The vote on \$1,268,000 carried 21 in favor, 6 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Cooper, Granatosky, Peruzzotti, Power, Warn and Billing.)

Capital - Parks and Recreation Open Space Acquisition and Development

A MOTION for \$0 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Fairbank.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$25,000 was made by Rep. Cerf, seconded by Rep. Ebbin. Rep. Cerf feels it is important to increase the account in order to have enough money if an opportunity arises to purchase property in the current economic downturn.

The vote on the amendment of \$25,000 was defeated 8 in favor, 19 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Bauer, Cerf, Cooper, Ebbin, Granatosky, Harrell, Loughlin and Steinfeld.)

The vote on \$0 carried 19 in favor, 8 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Bauer, Cerf, Cooper, Ebbin, Granatosky, Harrell, Moukawsher and Steinfeld.)

Account 1001 - Legislative Policy

A MOTION for \$51,210, as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

In response to Rep. Collins, Chairman Peruzzotti explained that the committee's intent is to eliminate the dues to the National League of Cities.

In response to Rep. Smuts, the Town Manager stated he does not support this reduction.

The vote on \$51,210 carried 18 in favor, 9 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Baril, Fairbank, Loughlin, Newsome, Pratt, Smuts, Steinfeld, Svencer and Billing.)

Account 1006 - Legal Services

A MOTION for \$355,000, as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Fairbank and so voted unanimously.

Account 1010 - Executive Management

A MOTION for \$382,910, as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Fairbank.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$379,100 was made by Rep. Cerf, seconded by Rep. Moukawsher.

In response to Rep. Cerf, the Town Manager clarified that his compensation evaluation was due July 1, 2008 so the Council's decision was retroactive to that date. He stated he does not know what the Council's intent is for July 1, 2009. He mentioned that the Town Clerk evaluation and compensation date is January 1.

The vote on the amendment of \$379,100 was defeated 2 in favor, 25 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Cerf and Sebastian.)

The vote on \$382,910 carried 26 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Warn.)

Account 1007 - Regional Agencies

A MOTION for \$105,999 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Fairbank.

The vote on \$105,999 carried 26 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Warn.)

Account 1051 - Human Services

A MOTION for \$651,718, as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Fairbank and so voted unanimously.

Account 7320 - Human Services Assistance Fund

A MOTION for \$40,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Fairbank and so vote unanimously.

Account 1054 - Health/Service/Cultural Agencies

Chairman Peruzzotti noted that the committee moved the individual cost centers separately in this account .

Account 10540 - Ledge Light Health District

A MOTION for \$305,539 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Fairbank.

The Town Manager advised members that he believes this account cannot be reduced without a one-year notice of intent to reduce funding per the agreement with the District.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$321,620 was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Collins.

Rep. Granatosky stated that this figures restores the account to the Manager's proposed figure.

The vote on the amendment of \$321,620 carried 24 in favor, 3 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Peruzzotti, Sebastian and Warn.)

Accounts 10541, 10542, 10543 - Visiting Nurse Association

A MOTION for \$937,900 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, and was seconded.

Rep. Peruzzotti stated the rationale of the committee for this 5% reduction. She reviewed the options for reducing expenditures if the reduction is approved.

Rep. Cerf stated she will support the reduction.

Rep. Smuts will not support the reduction because she feels that the services now provided in the schools are vital to this community.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$987,265 was made by Rep. Steinfeld, and was seconded. The Moderator noted that a two-thirds vote would be required to restore the figure to the Manager's proposed number.

In response to Rep. Collins, Mr. Heath, the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) Finance Officer, explained the financial impact of the freeze on Medicare reimbursements, and loss of municipal, state and federal revenues. He stated that they have instituted layoffs due to the decrease in revenues.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$962,265 was made by Rep. Fairbank, seconded by Rep. Collins.

Rep. Fairbank stated that this figure would restore the account to the Council's approved figure which was a \$25,000 reduction from the VNA request.

The vote on the amendment of \$962,265 carried 16 in favor, 11 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Evered, Granatosky, Harrell, Moukawsher, Peruzzotti, Power, Pratt, Sebastian, Smuts, Warn and Billing.)

Account 10544 - Housing Authority

A MOTION for \$54,825 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Fairbank and so voted unanimously.

Account 10545 - Service Agencies

A MOTION for \$90,050 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep.

Fairbank.

The vote on \$90,050 carried 26 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Smuts.)

Account 10546 - Cultural Agencies

A MOTION for \$4,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, was seconded and so voted unanimously.

Account 10547 - Marine Sewage Disposal

A MOTION for \$19,980 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$1,500 was made by Rep. Ebbin, seconded by Rep. Granatosky.

Rep. Ebbin stated that her rationale is that boat owners should use the fixed pump-out facilities that are available, and that Groton's funding is out of proportion compared to the Town of Stonington.

In response to the Moderator, the Town Manager stated that he would obtain the approved budget figures from the Towns of Stonington and New London.

The Manager responded to Rep. Warn stating that the pump-out boat program has expanded the service area from the Mystic River to the Thames River and extended the dates of operation since it was privatized. He is concerned that boat owners will not utilize the fixed sanitation facilities if the program is reduced. He feels that charging a fee would cause a significant drop in use of the service.

Rep. Cerf supports the program and feels the service is important to the community since Mystic is a major tourist destination.

Rep. Bauer agreed with Rep. Cerf.

Rep. Cooper will support the amendment. He feels a use tax or boat tax should be levied. He wants other Towns to share more of the burden for this program.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Ambroise.

The vote on Moving the Question carried 22 in favor, 5 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Moukawsher, Newsome, Power, Smuts and Billing.)

The vote on the amendment of \$1,500 was defeated 4 in favor, 23 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Cooper, Ebbin, Granatosky and Warn.)

The vote on \$19,980 carried 24 in favor, 3 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Fairbank, Warn and Billing.)

TOTAL FOR ACCOUNT 1054 Health/Service/Cultural Agencies: \$1,452,740

Account 1063 - Groton Public Library

A MOTION for \$1,826,780, as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Fairbank.

In response to Reps. Moukawsher and Bauer, Library Director Reiter explained the restructuring of staff, reassignment of duties, elimination of library pages, and noted that two current vacancies will not be filled.

The vote on \$1,826,780 carried 26 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Billing.)

Account 10650 - Mystic & Noank Library

A MOTION for \$206,700, as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Adams.

The Moderator noted that a two-thirds vote is needed to restore funds above the Council's approved figure.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$140,750 was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Ebbin.

Rep. Granatosky stated that the request to Groton is significantly more than the request to the Town of Stonington. She believes that usage is equal and that the neighboring municipality needs to pay its share.

Library Director Lois Hiller commented that Groton's contribution is about 40% of the budget. She stated that numerous attempts have been made to achieve increased funding from the Town of Stonington but that the attempts have been unsuccessful.

Rep. Collins stated he will support the committee figure. He feels that a strong campaign to inform Stonington residents of the lack of support from the municipality needs to be launched.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$197,400 was made by Rep. Newsome, seconded by Rep. Steinfeld.

Rep. Smuts stated that she has supported the library in the past but now feels that pressure needs to be exerted on the Town of Stonington to fund its share. She stated that it is unfair to draw down the endowment further and to continually place the burden on the Town of Groton. Rep. Smuts would like to see preferential treatment provided to Groton residents for programs if Groton is carrying the burden of funding.

Ms. Hiller stated that she has spoken with the new First Selectman of the Town of Stonington who is supportive but has not received any response or support from the Stonington Board of Finance. Rep. Harrell will not support reductions to the library. She feels the library is located in Groton and therefore should be supported.

Rep. Sebastian feels that the library is important to all Groton residents and should be supported.

Moderator Billing requested that Rep. Svencer assume the role of Moderator Pro Tempore for the remainder of discussion on this account.

Rep. Billing noted that discussion of this account is more difficult this year but is similar to the last two years regarding the lack of funding from the Town of Stonington. She will not support the Council's or Manager's figures. She will support the second amendment but if that fails she will recommend reducing the account by \$25,000 in an attempt to educate the Town of Stonington that they must share equally in the funding of the library.

Rep. Loughlin commented that he spoke on this issue at the Stonington budget meeting. He believes that Stonington will not carry its fair share and will not be influenced by Groton reducing its contribution. He agrees with Rep. Collins that Stonington residents need to be made aware of this problem.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Harrell, seconded by Fairbank. The vote to move the question carried 22 in favor, 5 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Evered, Moukawsher, Peruzzotti, Power and Warn.)

The vote on the amendment of \$197,400 was defeated 8 in favor, 19 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Bauer, Collins, Cooper, Fairbank, Newsome, Pratt, Steinfeld and Svencer.)

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$181,700 was made by Rep. Billing, seconded by Rep. Granatosky.

Rep. Billing stated that the reduction sends a message that a change is needed.

Rep. Newsome will not support this amendment.

Rep. Cooper supports full funding and suggested a letter be sent to all Stonington residents informing them of the lack of support by the municipality.

Rep. Evered believes that the Town of Groton does the right thing by supporting the three libraries and that the action of Town of Stonington is shameful.

In response to Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Billing informed members that the RTM letter sent to the Stonington Board of Finance about this issue received no response. She feels that because no

action was taken by the RTM to reduce Groton's funding, the letter was not taken seriously.

Rep. Bauer feel it is important to support the libraries.

Rep. Baril feels the action of the Town of Stonington is shameful but that reducing funding would hurt Groton residents.

Rep. Power supports the second amendment. He would like to prevent tax increases to Groton taxpayers. He believes Stonington will continue to cut and that action on the part of the RTM is needed. He stated that Stonington's contribution is less than a quarter of the required funding. The Town Manager suggested that the RTM approve the requested figure but withhold an agreed upon amount until certain conditions are met by the Town of Stonington. He noted that many members are frustrated by the lack of funding received from the Town of Stonington in this account and others. He mentioned that a joint discussion with the Town Council could be arranged as the Council also expressed some frustration concerning this account.

The Treasurer of the Library's Board of Directors stated that communication with the Town of Stonington has taken place, and editorials have run, but with no effect. He stated that a \$25,000 reduction will impact programs and services.

MOTION TO POSTPONE this account until Wednesday, May 6, 2009 was made by Rep. Smuts, seconded by Rep. Fairbank.

Discussion continued on the motion to postpone.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Loughlin, seconded by Rep. Power. The vote to move the question carried 25 in favor, 2 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Cooper and Moukawsher.)

The vote on postponement carried 14 in favor, 13 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Ambroise, Bauer, Billing, Cooper, Driscoll, Evered, Granatosky, Loughlin, McCarthy, Peruzzotti, Power, Pratt, and Warn.)

Rep. Billing resumed the duties as Moderator.

Account 10651 - Bill Memorial Library

A MOTION for \$20,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

The Moderator noted that since the committee number restores the account to the Manager's proposed number, a two-thirds vote will be necessary.

The vote on \$20,000 carried 24 in favor, 3 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Smuts, Warn and Billing.)

Account 3310 - Connecticut Special Revenue Fund

A MOTION for \$45,380, as approved by committee was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Fairbank.

The vote on \$45,380 carried 26 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Warn.)

The Moderator adjourned the meeting at 11:00 p.m. until Wednesday, May 6, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Budget Session - Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Moderator Natalie Billing called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

32 members were present, and a quorum was declared. (Rep. Collins arrived later.)

The Moderator reported that Reps. Barnhart, Garcia, Prochaska and Warn called to say they are unable to attend this meeting.

Members Present: Moderator Billing, Rep. Adams, Rep. Ambroise, Rep. Baril, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Beckwith, Rep. Briggs, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Collins, Rep. Cooper, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Ebbin, Rep. Evered, Rep. Fairbank, Rep. Garagliano, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Luck, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Moukawsher, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Peruzzotti, Rep. Power, Rep. Pratt, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter and Rep. Svencer

Members Absent: Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Finlayson, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Hellekson, Rep. Metayer, Rep. Prochaska, Rep. Steere, Rep. Tilney and Rep. Warn

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, Mystic & Noank Library Director Lois Hiller and board members, School Superintendent Paul Kadri, Board of Education Chairman Beverly Washington and Board of Education members, Director of Buildings and Grounds Wes Greenleaf, School Business Manager Hugh Hunter, Town Councilor Frank O'Beirne, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox, and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

Communications

The Moderator offered congratulations to Rep. Luck on being elected as a Groton City Councilor on May 4, 2009.

Community and Development Services

Moderator Billing announced that the Mystic & Noank Library account will be the first account this evening due to the postponement from Monday, May 4, 2009. The figures currently on the floor are the main motion and two amendments.

Since she had spoken on this account earlier, Moderator Billing requested that Rep. Power assume the role of Moderator Pro Tempore until the Mystic & Noank Library account has been completed.

Account 10650 - Mystic & Noank Library

Moderator Pro Tempore Power reviewed the figures on the floor.

The main motion figure is \$206,700; first amendment figure is \$140,750; second amendment figure is \$181,700.

2009-0126

Services Shared with Stonington

SERVICES SHARED WITH STONINGTON

This matter was Referred to the Town Council Committee of the Whole.

Chairman Peruzzotti suggested that the RTM submit a referral to the Town Council requesting a joint committee be formed to review this issue and find a solution to the problem of lack of funding from the Town of Stonington. Rep. Peruzzotti stated that she believes full support of the library should be approved. She hopes that action taken by the proposed joint committee will rectify this situation before next year's budget.

Rep. Sebastian received two calls in support of library funding. He will not support a reduction to this account.

Items discussed were use of contingency funds if the library has a shortfall, reduction to the account in order to send a message to Stonington, and the increase in patronage during tough economic times.

Rep. Massett believes in supporting the library for our citizens and feels it does not matter what Stonington does since it has never contributed its fair share.

Rep. Beckwith agreed with Rep. Massett. She feels it is the Town's responsibility to fund the library located in our town.

Rep. Bauer supports fully funding the library.

Rep. Steinfeld supports full funding of the library. She stated that any reduction will hurt the patrons of the library.

Rep. Smuts feels that action needs to be taken to send a message to the Town of Stonington. She has supported the library in the past but feels differently now. She believes that promises from the Stonington First Selectman to work with the Board of Finance will not achieve the desired result. She feels now is the time to exert pressure by forming a task force.

Rep. Garagliano will not support any of the current figures on the floor. She would like to support a figure between the second amendment and the main motion figure.

Rep. Loughlin supports the second amendment figure. He reminded members that this library is not just a Groton library but a joint library for the communities of Groton and Stonington. He feels it weakens our position when referred to as "our library".

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Svencer, seconded by Rep. Fairbank. The vote on moving the question carried 28 in favor, 3 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Moukawsher, Peruzzotti and Power.)

The vote on the amendment of \$181,700 was defeated 8 in favor, 23 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Billing, Briggs, Cerf, Ebbin, Granatosky, Loughlin, Streeter and Power.) (Rep. Collins arrived at this time.)

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$196,700 was made by Rep. Cerf, seconded by Rep. Smuts. In response to Rep. Sebastian, Library Director Lois Hiller stated that Stonington has flat-funded its contribution for the last several years at \$74,000 and this year reduced its funding to \$64,000. Nancy Hevenor, President of the Library Board of Directors, cited the actions that have been taken to address the lack of support from the Town of Stonington. She reported a 30% increase in usage of the library and its programs this year. She stated she is not optimistic that any action taken by the Town of Groton will produce the desired results. She reported that the State average for municipal contributions to libraries is \$41.96 per resident. Groton's average is \$44.00 per resident and Stonington's average is \$16.75 per resident. She noted that Stonington funds \$300,000 for its libraries which represents only 0.5% of its budget.

Rep. Billing stated she will support the amendment on the floor, but would have liked a larger reduction. She feels the figure is close to the Council's number. She stated that she supports the formation of a task force, but believes that a shared public facility such as the library must be equally funded by both municipalities.

Rep. Smuts agreed with Rep. Billing. She feels it is the RTM's responsibility to make the difficult fiscal decisions for the residents of Groton.

Rep. Evered supports the main motion figure of \$206,700. She endorses Rep. Peruzzotti's suggestion of forming a task force.

Rep. Sebastian supports the Library's proposed budget since it is the same figure approved last year.

Rep. Cooper supports full funding. He objects to holding the library hostage because of the mean-spiritedness of Stonington.

Rep. Cerf reminded members about the difference in the mill rates for the Towns of Groton and Stonington. She agrees with members who feel that Stonington needs to pay its fair share. She will support the main motion figure if the amendment fails. She stated that she would welcome a request from the library for additional needed funds if Stonington does not take any action.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Massett, seconded by Rep. Harrell. The vote on moving the question carried 28 in favor, 4 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Loughlin, Moukawsher, Peruzzotti and Power.)

The vote on the amendment of \$196,700 carried 17 in favor, 15 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Ambroise, Baril, Bauer, Beckwith, Briggs, Cooper, Evered, Harrell, Luck, Massett, Moukawsher, Pratt, Peruzzotti, Sebastian, Steinfeld.)

TOTAL FOR ACCOUNT 1065 - Other Libraries: \$216,700

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Chairman Fairbank read the minutes from the meetings held on April 6 and 28, 2009. (Minutes are on file.)

A motion to accept the minutes was made by Rep. Fairbank, seconded by Rep. Moukawsher and voted unanimously.

Account 1080 - Education

A MOTION for \$72,572,500 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Fairbank, seconded by Rep. Smuts.

Rep. Ebbin stated that she is unhappy with the figure on the floor but will support it. She feels that the proposed Board of Education budget is a level service request and that the reduction of \$840,000 by the Council will have a negative impact on schools.

Rep. Smuts agreed with Rep. Ebbin and will grudgingly support the figure on the floor.

Rep. Cerf agreed with previous speakers.

In response to the Moderator, the School Superintendent stated that based on the positive relationship he has formed with the Town Manager, he hopes to maintain a healthy school budget. He noted that he will work diligently with the Board of Education, Town Manager and the Town Council to decide what actions would be necessary if the difficult economic situation continues.

The vote on \$72,572,500 carried unanimously.

Capital Item - Fitch High School

A MOTION for \$250,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Fairbank, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

In response to Rep. Sebastian, Wes Greenleaf, Director of Buildings and Grounds, stated that the last "needs assessment study" was done in 2003. He referred Mr. Sebastian to page 38 of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget book which contains the current information on CIP school projects.

The vote on \$250,000 carried 31 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Sebastian.)

Capital Item - West Side Middle School

A MOTION for \$175,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Fairbank, seconded by Rep. Streeter.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$0 was made by Rep. Moukawsher, seconded by Rep. Sebastian.

Rep. Moukawsher inquired why it is necessary to do this project now instead of waiting until it could be part of the Phase II project.

Mr. Greenleaf stated that with recent incidents of vandalism and student security it is necessary now and would not be affected by the Phase II project.

Rep. Massett will not support the amendment. She knows that the security at the main entrance of the school is a problem. She stated that Phase II construction does not have a projected start date and feels this should be done now.

Rep. Garagliano agreed with Rep. Massett.

Items discussed were: current monitoring equipment, locking exterior doors when school is in session, domestic violence issues, and the costs and benefits of the presence of a security guard.

Rep. Granatosky will not support the amendment. She feels this is a safety issue and is more important than the CIP for Fitch High School running track repair.

Rep. Luck will not support the amendment. She believes this should be done before a serious incident occurs.

The vote on the amendment of \$0 was defeated 2 in favor, 29 opposed, 1 abstention. (In favor: Rep. Moukawsher and Billing. Abstaining: Rep. Adams.)

The vote on \$175,000 carried 30 in favor, 2 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Moukawsher and Billing.)

The Moderator adjourned the meeting at 8:27 p.m. until Monday, May 11, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Budget Session - Monday May 11, 2009

Moderator Natalie Billing called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

27 members were present, and a quorum was declared. (Rep. Ambroise arrived later.)

The Moderator reported that Reps. Adams, Barnhart, Luck, Power, Streeter and Warn called to say they are unable to attend this meeting.

Members Present: Moderator Billing, Rep. Ambroise, Rep. Baril, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Beckwith, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Collins, Rep. Cooper, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Ebbin, Rep. Evered, Rep. Fairbank, Rep. Garagliano, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Moukawsher, Rep. Peruzzotti, Rep. Pratt, Rep. Prochaska, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Steinfeld and Rep. Svencer
Members Absent: Rep. Adams, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Briggs, Rep. Finlayson, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Hellekson, Rep. Luck, Rep. Metayer, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Power, Rep. Steere, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Tilney and Rep. Warn

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, Finance Director Sal Pandolfo, Administrative Services Director Doug Ackerman, Public Works Director Gary Schneider and staff, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox, and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

Communications

Moderator Billing noted that the referral entitled "Services Shared with Stonington" will be forwarded to the Town Council. Reps. Bauer, Evered, Granatosky, McCarthy, Peruzzotti and Smuts volunteered to serve on the committee.

The Moderator announced that Rep. Finlayson has been confirmed as a registered voter in Quaker Hill and therefore is no longer an RTM member.

She stated that the regular RTM meeting scheduled for May 20, 2009 is cancelled. She mentioned that the budget accounts scheduled for May 20, 2009 may be reassigned to Monday, May 18, 2009.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Chairman Collins read the minutes from meetings held on April 7, 14, and 20, 2009. (Minutes are on file.)

A motion to accept the minutes was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Baril and so voted unanimously.

Account 1035 - Public Works

A MOTION for \$7,143,686 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$7,104,000 was made by Rep. Sebastian, seconded by Rep. Peruzzotti.

Rep. Sebastian stated that he feels that this department is over-staffed, inefficient and has no measurable objectives. His amendment is based on a 1% reduction to payroll.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$6,992,338 was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Fairbank.

Rep. Peruzzotti stated that the reallocation of funds into other functions explains the 4% reduction to this account. She noted that upon scrutinizing this account, there is actually only a 1% reduction and she feels it can be reduced further.

Public Works Director Gary Schneider explained the Leadership and General Support cost center that is in every function for all Town departments. He answered questions about the expanded snow removal service to fire departments, Ledge Light Health District, Catherine Kolnaski School and Fitch High School; the new treated salt spray for snow events; and the method used for calculating snow removal costs.

Rep. Cerf supports the second amendment figure. She feels that the Town should have made efforts to discuss concessions with the unions.

Items discussed were layoffs, union contracts, no further reductions in services, reducing

employee benefits, increasing employee contributions for benefits, savings from retirements, establishing a joint process with the Town Council for contracts that are being negotiated, and comparing snow plowing costs with neighboring towns.

Rep. Sebastian will support the amendment because he feels this action may result in layoffs and force the unions to consider concessions.

Rep. Granatosky opposes the amendment. She feels the cut is too deep. She would like to recommend that the Council and Manager work on re-negotiating current contracts with the unions.

Rep. Smuts supports the amendment. She would like a referral to the Council to engage in discussions with all the unions to prompt concessions. She feels that the Town needs to request concessions or lose employees in order to avoid any further cuts in services that will affect the taxpayers.

In response, the Town Manager noted that the Town is not experiencing the same financial difficulties as the State. He stated that when the budget process is complete and it is known how many and which positions need to be eliminated, the Town can approach the unions.

Administrative Services Director Doug Ackerman clarified that there are three unions. He noted that many of the State concessions were tied to agreements that assured no layoffs for the next two years. He noted that one union contract is expiring in June and the others will expire over the next few years.

The vote on the amendment of \$6,992,338 was defeated 9 in favor, 18 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Cerf, Cooper, Evered, Fairbank, Hubbard, Peruzzotti, Prochaska, Sebastian and Smuts.)

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$7,083,686 was made by Rep. Ebbin, seconded by Rep. Peruzzotti.

Rep. Ebbin stated that her rationale is based on the committee's discussion of this account. She mentioned items that could be eliminated and fees that could be increased to generate more revenue.

Rep. Moukawsher will support the amendment. She does not want to eliminate any full-time employee but feels that contracts should be renegotiated.

Rep. Smuts will support the amendment as she feels it will force the Town to ask the unions for concessions.

Rep. Sebastian will support the amendment because he believes it will force the Town to renegotiate union contracts.

The vote on the amendment of \$7,083,686 carried 15 in favor, 12 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Ambroise, Baril, Bauer, Beckwith, Collins, Driscoll, Garagliano, Harrell, Loughlin, McCarthy, Pratt and Steinfeld.)

Account 2020 - Sewer Operating Fund

A MOTION for \$5,623,244 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Harrell.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$5,595,452 was made by Rep. Sebastian, seconded by Rep. Peruzzotti.

Rep. Sebastian stated that he feels that 25% of the Public Works Director's salary should not be allocated to this account.

Items discussed were allocation of salaries, user fees, overtime costs, guard services, increased costs of sludge disposal and chemical treatment supplies, costs for wastewater operator certification, and required education for employee recertification.

The vote on the amendment of \$5,595,452 was defeated 6 in favor, 21 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Cerf, Cooper, Evered, Peruzzotti, Prochaska and Sebastian.)

The vote on \$5,623,244 carried 23 in favor, 4 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Cooper, Peruzzotti,

Prochaska and Sebastian.)

Account 2030 - Solid Waste Collections

A MOTION for \$2,582,354 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Fairbank and so voted unanimously.

Account 6040 - Fleet Reserve Fund

A MOTION for \$1,011,312 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Fairbank.

Items discussed were: vehicle usage, employee mileage reimbursement, hybrid savings and the hybrid purchase grant program.

The Moderator suggested that discussion on making a referral to the RTM Public Works Committee in regard to researching the savings if employees' personal vehicles were used could take place at the June 17, 2009 meeting.

The vote on \$1,011,312 carried unanimously.

Moderator Billing recessed the meeting at 8:38 p.m. The meeting resumed at 8:51 p.m.

Capital Item - Roads - Pavement Management Program - Town

A MOTION for \$526,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Fairbank and so voted unanimously.

The Moderator stated that the two CIP accounts, Road - Pavement Management Program for the City and for Groton Long Point (GLP) are postponed to Thursday, May 14, 2009 when the City and GLP budgets are scheduled.

Capital Item - Bridge Reconstruction

A MOTION for \$20,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Harrell and so voted unanimously,

Capital Item - Thames Street Rehabilitation

Moderator Billing noted that action is not required at this time for this account. She stated that it will come before the RTM for approval prior to going to a bond referendum.

Capital Item - New Sidewalk Construction - Drozdyk Drive

A MOTION for \$30,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Massett.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$0 was made by Rep. Ebbin, and was seconded.

Rep. Ebbin stated she feels it is the responsibility of the developer to install sidewalks as part of any project.

Items discussed were the exact location of the extension of current sidewalks, safety and liability issues, improved walking access for residents, and responsibility for snow removal on sidewalks.

Rep. Beckwith will not support the amendment due to safety issues for pedestrians.

Rep. Steinfeld will not support the amendment and agrees with Rep. Beckwith. She feels that complete sidewalks are needed based on the number of units located at La Triumphe Apartments, The Ledges, Windham Falls and AHEPA Apartments.

Rep. Evered supports the main motion of \$30,000 and agrees with Reps. Beckwith and Steinfeld.

Rep. Collins will not support the amendment. He stated that the sidewalk will only be asphalt, but will provide access in front of a vacant parcel. He believes that if the parcel is developed, the sidewalk would be replaced with concrete as part of the project.

Rep. Moukawsher supports the amendment. She believes that this expenditure could be postponed.

Rep. Garagliano will not support the amendment. She noted that she does not want an accident like the one at Village Lane to occur before the Town takes action to install a sidewalk.

The vote on the amendment of \$0 was defeated 4 in favor, 23 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Ebbin, Granatosky, Moukawsher and Smuts.)

The vote on \$30,000 carried 23 in favor, 4 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Ebbin, Granatosky, Moukawsher and Smuts.)

Capital Item - Public Buildings - Police Station

A MOTION for \$120,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Harrell.

It was noted that this item is for plans and that the entire project will go to referendum in November 2011.

Items discussed were the new State requirements for jail cells, cooperation with the City and Groton Long Point Police Departments in regard to the total number of jail cells, and current conditions of the Town cells.

The vote on \$120,000 carried 23 in favor, 4 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Ebbin, Fairbank, Moukawsher and Billing.)

Capital Item - Golf Course Facilities

A MOTION for \$177,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Driscoll.

Rep. Collins explained that the committee was led to believe that the Council's figure was \$177,000 and therefore approved this figure.

Items discussed were reasons for replacing windows and doors simultaneously; energy savings for both winter and summer, requirements and alternatives for hurricane-rated windows; oil tank replacement; the current lease for the restaurant; restaurant responsibilities and equipment upgrades; and the use of LoCip funds.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$240,000 was made by Rep. Garagliano, and was seconded. Rep. Garagliano's rationale is that she believes the committee approved the lower figure because they were endorsing a reduction by the Council. She noted that the restaurant owners are doing their share of improvements.

Rep. Ebbin will not support the amendment. She feels the lease is too generous to the restaurant operation and that the Town needs to evaluate how much money is invested in restoring and maintaining certain buildings.

Rep. Cerf supports the amendment as she feels the facility is used year-round by local residents and is not just a "golf course club house".

Rep. Moukawsher will support the amendment. She feels it will save energy and reduce fuel costs. She recommends that solar panels and wind energy be investigated as ways to further achieve self-sustaining energy savings.

The vote on the amendment of \$240,000 carried 19 in favor, 8 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Ambroise, Baril, Collins, Ebbin, Harrel, Granatosky, Loughlin and Prochaska.)

Capital Item - WPCF - Sewer Line Infrastructure Repairs

A MOTION for \$460,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Fairbank and so voted unanimously.

Capital Item - WPCF - Mechanical/Electrical Equipment Replacement

A MOTION for \$125,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Svencer and so voted unanimously.

Capital Item - WPCF - Facility Repairs/Improvements

A MOTION for \$60,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Fairbank and so voted unanimously.

Capital Item - WPCF - Facility Renovations

Moderator Billing noted that action is not required at this time for this account. She stated that it

will come before the RTM for approval prior to going to a bond referendum.

The Moderator adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m until Thursday, May 14, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Budget Session - Thursday May 14, 2009

Moderator Natalie Billing called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

30 members were present, and a quorum was declared. (Reps. Loughlin and Warn arrived later.)

The Moderator reported that Reps. Beckwith, Power, Pratt, and Svencer called to say they are unable to attend this meeting.

Members Present: Moderator Billing, Rep. Adams, Rep. Ambroise, Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Briggs, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Collins, Rep. Cooper, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Ebbin, Rep. Evered, Rep. Fairbank, Rep. Garagliano, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Luck, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Moukawsher, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Peruzzotti, Rep. Prochaska, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter and Rep. Warn

Members Absent: Rep. Beckwith, Rep. Finlayson, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Hellekson, Rep. Hubbard, Rep.

Metayer, Rep. Power, Rep. Pratt, Rep. Steere, Rep. Svencer and Rep. Tilney

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, Administrative Services Director Doug Ackerman, Finance Director Sal Pandolfo, Town Police Chief Kelly Fogg, Deputy Chief Michael Crowley, Captain Steve Smith, Groton City Mayor Dennis Popp, City Finance Director Michael Hillsberg, City Police Chief Giulini, Groton Long Point Association President Robert Congdon, GLP Police Chief Jack Drumm, GLP Treasurer Tom Sullivan, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

Communications

Moderator Billing mentioned that the regular RTM meeting on May 20, 2009 has been cancelled and announced that the budget session scheduled on May 20, 2009 will start at 7:30 p.m.

The Moderator announced that two public hearings have been scheduled by the Parks and Recreation Department for May 27 and 28, 2009 to receive public comment on the Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

Rep. Luck clarified to the members and the public that the City and Town Charters allow her to serve as both a Groton City Councilor and as a Representative on the RTM.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

In the absence of Chairman Pratt, Rep. Ambroise read the minutes of the meeting held on April 22, 2009. (Minutes are on file.)

A motion to accept the minutes was made by Rep. Ambroise, seconded by Rep. Fairbank and so voted unanimously.

Account 1024 - Public Safety

A MOTION for \$6,582,058 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Pratt, seconded by Rep. Fairbank and so voted unanimously.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chairman Granatosky read the minutes of the meeting held on April 22, 2009. (Minutes are on file.)

A motion to accept the minutes was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Fairbank. Clarification was provided concerning the approved Town Council figure for the City Police account.

Rep. Moukawsher requested the minutes be amended to indicate that the figure in the budget book included a 3% increase for the Town Clerk's salary line and the Town Council vote did not. (Reps. Loughlin and Warn arrived during the reading of the minutes.)

The vote to accept the minutes as amended carried unanimously.

Account 1005 - Town Clerk

A MOTION for \$392,221 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by

Rep. Fairbank.

Discussion took place on the Council's decision to not approve a wage increase for the Town Clerk.

Moderator Billing clarified that the Town Clerk's proposed budget did include a wage increase, but the Council's figure did not.

Rep. Ambroise does not support the actions of the Town Council.

Items discussed were restoring the Town Council's 3% cut to the Town Clerk's salary line; professional development and training costs; and the decrease in Town conveyance tax revenues.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$394,834 was made by Rep. Loughlin, seconded by Rep. Cerf. Rep. Loughlin stated this restores funds to provide a raise for the Town Clerk and can be done by a two-thirds vote.

Rep. Smuts supports a raise for the Town Clerk but feels that funds should have been restored to the Manager's budget for his raise.

Moderator Billing noted that the Manager's budget was not reduced so the money is available if the Council authorizes a raise.

Rep. Cerf agreed with Rep. Loughlin..

The Town Manager recommended that if the amendment is intended to restore the salary increase for the Town Clerk it should be adjusted to \$395,023 to cover social security and similar items.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$395,023 was made by Rep. Loughlin, seconded by Rep. Ambroise.

The vote on the amendment of \$395,023 carried 20 in favor, 10 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Adams, Barnhart, Briggs, Collins, Ebbin, Moukawsher, Sebastian, Streeter, Warn and Billing.)

Account 10901 - City of Groton Highway

A MOTION for \$2,099,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Fairbank.

The Moderator clarified that the Town Attorney has issued an opinion that the figures for this account and the Pavement Management CIP item agreed to by the City and the Town Council per the City Charter may not be changed by the RTM. She stated that if figures are changed by the RTM it could subject the entire budget to a challenge.

Items discussed were the reasons for voting on accounts that the RTM has no authority to change and the differences between the highway account and the CIP Pavement Management item.

The Manager explained that a decision by the Town Council was made to include funds for City and Groton Long Point Paving in the CIP program. He explained that this change will provide more control on paving expenditures and which roads are scheduled to be paved.

The vote on \$2,099,000 carried 28 in favor, 2 abstention. (Abstaining: Reps. Ebbin and Smuts.)

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Capital Item - City of Groton Pavement Management Program Implementation

A MOTION for \$411,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Harrell.

Rep. Ebbin feels that the increase to this account is shocking in light of reductions made to the Education budget. She stated for the record that she is opposed to the increase and would not support it if she had a choice.

Rep. Smuts agreed with Rep. Ebbin.

Items discussed were the evaluation process for roads being repaired versus re-paved; in-house paving versus use of paving contractors; sizes of roads; types of sidewalks; curbing; and asphalt sidewalks.

The vote on \$411,000 carried 27 in favor, 1 opposed, 2 abstentions. (Opposed: Rep. Ebbin, Abstaining: Reps. Smuts and Warn.)

FINANCE COMMITTEE**Account 10900 - City of Groton Police**

A MOTION for \$2,328,500 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Ambroise.

The Moderator noted that this figure would require a two-thirds vote as it restores funds above the Council figure.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$2,299,000 was made by Rep. Fairbank, seconded by Rep. Streeter.

Rep. Fairbank noted that he supports the Council's reduction.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$2,358,015 was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Collins.

Rep. Granatosky clarified that she supported the committee figure only to arrive at some middle ground and break the deadlock in committee.

Rep. Ambroise supports the second amendment.

Items discussed were what items would be eliminated with the Council reduction; the use of "COPS grant"; extending the service life of police vehicles; and the demographic differences between the City and the Town. Also mentioned was that the City account includes pensions, medical insurance, liability insurance, heart and hypertension payments, and workers' compensation which are not included in the Town or GLP police accounts.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Sebastian, seconded by Harrell.

The vote on moving the question carried 23 in favor, 7 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Ebbin, Garagliano, Moukawsher, Newsome, Peruzzotti, Smuts and Warn.)

The vote on the amendment of \$2,358,015 was defeated 11 in favor, 19 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Ambroise, Baril, Bauer, Cerf, Driscoll, Ebbin, Granatosky, Harrell, Loughlin, Moukawsher, and Sebastian.)

Discussion continued on cost savings by extending the life of vehicles; the increase in line items for office supplies, advertising and general materials; and the differences in wear and tear on City vehicles compared to Town vehicles.

Rep. Ambroise will not support the figure on the floor. He feels that the safety of citizens is of utmost importance.

Mayor Popp stated that the police union has ratified a contract that contains concessions; the proposed contract would expire in 2012 and must be approved by the City Council.

Rep. Bauer will not support the amended figure. She agrees with Rep. Ambroise.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$2,352,015 was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Ambroise.

Rep. Granatosky stated that her rationale is to reduce the account by \$6,000 which is the amount of savings if vehicle usage is extended to three years.

Acting Republican Floor Leader Deb Peruzzotti requested a recess for a caucus at 8:42.

The meeting resumed at 8:58 p.m.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Sebastian, seconded by Rep. Harrell.

The vote on moving question carried unanimously.

The vote on the amendment of \$2,352,015 was defeated 10 in favor, 20 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Ambroise, Baril, Bauer, Cerf, Driscoll, Ebbin, Granatosky, Harrell, Loughlin and Moukawsher.)

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$2,314,000 was made by Rep. Ambroise, seconded by Rep.

Moukawsher.

Rep. Ambroise stated that he is trying to find middle ground and noted that the Town Police account was reduced by only \$30,000. He commented that the largest industrial taxpayers are located in the City.

The vote on the amendment of \$2,314,000 was defeated 10 in favor, 20 opposed. (In favor: Ambroise, Baril, Bauer, Cerf, Driscoll, Ebbin, Granatosky, Harrel, Loughlin and Moukawsher.)

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Smuts, seconded by Rep. Harrell. The vote on moving the question carried 23 in favor, 7 opposed. (Opposed: Ambroise, Bauer, Driscoll, Ebbin, Granatosky, Luck and Moukawsher.)

The vote on the amendment of \$2,299,000 carried 18 in favor, 12 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Ambroise, Baril, Bauer, Collins, Driscoll, Ebbin, Evered, Harrell, Granatosky, Luck, McCarthy and Moukawsher.)

Account 10911 - Groton Long Point Highway Maintenance

A MOTION for \$112,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Steinfeld.

The vote on \$112,000 carried 27 in favor, 3 abstentions. (Abstaining: Reps. Ambroise, Ebbin and Smuts.)

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Capital Item - Groton Long Point Pavement Management Program Implementation

A MOTION for \$95,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Peruzzotti.

The vote on \$95,000 carried 29 in favor, 1 abstention. (Abstaining: Rep. Smuts.)

Account 10910 - Groton Long Point Police

A MOTION for \$208,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Peruzzotti.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$0 was made by Rep. Massett, seconded by Rep. Fairbank. Rep. Massett feels that in the current economic times, taxpayers cannot afford to fund a separate police service for Groton Long Point (GLP).

In response to Rep. Sebastian, the Town Manager referred to a 2004 Town Attorney opinion which cites GLP's legal status as a borough as well as the Town's obligation to provide police services by agreement with GLP.

Rep. Fairbank agrees that the GLP Police Department serves the GLP residents well, but feels that there should be more cooperation between the Town and GLP police to find some reductions. This is the reason why he supported the Council's lower figure for the City of Groton Police Account. He feels there are opportunities for reductions where redundancies exist and that this may be a good place to initiate discussion.

Items discussed were the need for a separate police department, the number of winter and summer residents, winter vacancies, mutual aid services, and the cost for the Town to provide police service.

GLP President Congdon believes a gated community would create a larger separation between the Town and GLP. He stated that GLP pays 10% of the taxes paid in Groton. He referred to a memo prepared by the Town Police Chief that states that it would cost the Town \$211,858 to provide police service.

GLP Police Chief Drumm provided details of how policing is conducted in the GLP community. Rep. Garagliano will not support the \$0 figure. She mentioned that the handout from Chief Fogg stated that GLP police services would cost more if provided by the Town; therefore she will support the Council figure.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure \$185,120 was made by Rep. Ambroise, seconded by Rep. Peruzzotti.

Rep. Ambroise stated his rationale is based on the discussion of the City Police account at this meeting and feels that the same 11% decrease should be applied in order to treat both accounts equally.

Rep. Smuts will not support the \$0 figure. She feels everyone deserves the same level of safety. She has concerns in regard to the timing of the dissemination of the memo provided at this meeting.

In response to Rep. Smuts, the Moderator stated that the Town Manager was uncomfortable distributing the handout earlier since the City was not able to review and discuss it with the Town Police Chief. Groton Long Point had dialogue with Chief Fogg in regard to Town-provided police service. She stated that previous reports of this type have been made in regard to GLP.

Rep. Cerf will not support the amendment since the reduction would not be treating both police forces equally. She noted that the GLP police request is only 30% of its budget versus 50% for the City budget request.

Rep. Sebastian supports the Council figure. He noted that GLP did not increase its request from last year.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Fairbank. The vote on moving the question carried 26 in favor, 4 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Cooper, Moukawsher, Newsome and Peruzzotti.)

The vote on the amendment of \$185,120 was defeated 6 in favor, 24 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Ambroise, Cooper, Driscoll, Granatosky, Warn and Billing.)

The vote on the amendment of \$0 was defeated 1 in favor, 29 opposed. (In favor: Rep. Massett.)

The vote on \$208,000 carried 25 in favor, 5 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Ambroise, Cooper, Fairbank, Warn and Billing.)

Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox formally announced that she will not be seeking re-election in November 2009. She mentioned that she began her political career as a member of the RTM and served as Moderator for four years; she felt this was an appropriate place to make the announcement, and that it was a difficult decision.

The Moderator adjourned the meeting at 9:48 p.m. until Monday May 18, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Budget Session - Monday May 18, 2009

Moderator Natalie Billing called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

28 members were present, and a quorum was declared.

The Moderator reported that Reps. Pratt and Sebastian called to say they are unable to attend this meeting.

(Reps. Ambroise, Cerf, Collins, Prochaska and Svencer arrived later.)

Members Present: Moderator Billing, Rep. Adams, Rep. Ambroise, Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Collins, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Ebbin, Rep. Evered, Rep. Fairbank, Rep. Garagliano, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Moukawsher, Rep. Peruzzotti, Rep. Power, Rep. Prochaska, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Svencer and Rep. Warn

Members Absent: Rep. Beckwith, Rep. Briggs, Rep. Cooper, Rep. Finlayson, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Hellekson, Rep. Luck, Rep. Metayer, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Pratt, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. Steere and Rep. Tilney

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, Administrative Services Director Doug Ackerman, Manager of Emergency Communications Joseph Sastre, Manager of Labor Relations/Risk Management Joyce Sauchuk, Finance Director Sal Pandolfo and staff, Registrars of Voters David Rose and Stephen Massett, Probate Judge Fred

Palm and staff, Deputy Town Clerk Janet Downs, and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chairman Granatosky read the minutes of the meeting held on April 23, 2009. (Minutes are on file.)

A motion to accept the minutes was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Fairbank and so voted unanimously.

Account 1003 - Voter Registration

A MOTION for \$101,692 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Moukawsher, seconded by Rep. Evered.

Rep. Massett disclosed for the record that she is married to Registrar Stephen Massett.

In response to Rep. Garagliano, Registrar Rose confirmed that a small increase to poll worker compensation is proposed in an attempt to attract new workers.

The vote on \$101,692 carried 26 in favor, 1 abstention. (Abstaining: Rep. Massett.)

Account 1004 - Probate

A MOTION for \$17,510 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Fairbank.

Judge Palm commented that the State's proposal to regionalize the State Probate Courts may establish Groton as a regional probate court office. He explained that a formula would be used to collect revenue from the regional towns to share in the costs so that Groton does not carry an unfair share of the expenses. He noted that personnel costs are paid by the State. He reported that the First Selectman of Stonington is in favor of consolidation but that the Towns of Ledyard and North Stonington have not committed yet.

The vote on \$17,510 carried unanimously.

Account 1013 - Finance Administration

A MOTION for \$1,411,493 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Fairbank.

The Moderator confirmed that this is a reduction of \$10,000 from the Council's figure.

The vote on \$1,411,493 carried 26 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Massett.)

Account 1092 - Fire Districts PILOT

A MOTION for \$246,012 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Fairbank.

Items discussed included using the funds to conduct a town-wide fire service assessment and the formula that is used for disbursement of the funds to the individual fire districts.

The Town Manager noted that the Council has a referral in regard to a town-wide fire service assessment.

Rep. Smuts asked the Town Manager to review the allocations of these funds to the fire districts.

The vote on \$246,012 carried unanimously.

Account 2120 - Revaluation Fund

A MOTION for \$129,250 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Peruzzotti.

The Moderator noted that the next revaluation is scheduled for 2011 unless the law is changed.

The Manager confirmed that the cost would be \$400,000 for a full revaluation.

The vote on \$129,250 carried unanimously.

Account 1014 - Administrative Services

A MOTION for \$2,945,817 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by

Rep. Moukawsher.

Items discussed included the duties of the IT Administrator and GIS Analyst; the increase to Utilities/Fuel/Mileage line item; the details of professional development and training expenditures; software maintenance fees; the possibility of the Town becoming a regional dispatch center.

(Rep. Ambroise arrived at this time.)

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$2,896,494 was made by Rep. Peruzzotti, seconded by Rep. Power.

Rep. Peruzzotti noted that this was an amended figure proposed in committee.

It was clarified that the amended figure was never acted on in committee because another amended figure passed.

Items discussed included the additional responsibilities shifted from the Library account to Administrative Services; the complex make-up of the three divisions which make up this account; software maintenance fees; regional training.

The Manager feels that a reduction of \$50,000 in this account would affect the in-house service provided to Town departments. He noted that the RTM reduction in the Planning Account will affect a position and impact staff.

Rep. Cerf will not support the amendment. She feels it is important to provide the necessary network security, adequate training and support to IT systems, and Town departments.

Rep. Smuts will not support the amendment. She feels that this function is an integral part of the Town that helps all of the departments to run efficiently.

The vote on the amendment of \$2,896,494 was defeated 8 in favor, 20 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Adams, Fairbank, Garagliano, Peruzzotti, Power, Prochaska, Warn and Billing.)

The vote on \$2,945,817 carried 23 in favor, 5 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Adams, Fairbank, Peruzzotti, Power and Warn.)

Account 6050 - Computer Replacement Fund

A MOTION for \$53,490 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Smuts and so voted unanimously.

Capital Item - Network Infrastructure Upgrade

A MOTION for \$60,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Moukawsher.

In response to Rep. Ebbin, Mr. Ackerman stated that a second tier of security will be added to the existing fire wall that would track any intrusion, where it originated and what information was obtained.

The vote on \$60,000 carried unanimously.

Capital Item - Replacement Town Radio System

A MOTION for \$25,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Smuts and so vote unanimously.

Capital Item - Replacement Radio/Telephone Voice Recorder

A MOTION for \$25,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Loughlin.

The Moderator noted this is a restoration and requires a two-thirds vote.

Items discussed included replacing analog equipment with digital equipment; the improved capabilities; the lack of replacement parts for the analog equipment; the yearly maintenance fee.

The vote on \$25,000 carried unanimously.

Account 10260 - Groton Ambulance Service

A MOTION for \$81,951 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Peruzzotti.

Items discussed included the service fees mandated by the State; reimbursements received from Medicare, Medicaid, Tricare and private insurance; uncollectable fees.

Marvin Berkhalter, president of Groton Ambulance provided statistics on the number of service calls and reimbursements and explained the billing process. He noted that the uncollectable fees are less than the State and national average.

The vote on \$81,951 carried unanimously.

Account 10261 - Mystic River Ambulance Service

A MOTION for \$37,500 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Fairbank.

In response to Rep. Ebbin, President Christopher Clarkin stated that the Town of Stonington has funded the full request only once in the last several years. He noted that a lease with T-Mobile provides some revenue and a new billing system provides quicker reimbursement which leads to some cost savings. He mentioned that Stone Ridge Retirement Center in Stonington is having an impact on the number of calls. He mentioned that efforts are being made to persuade the Town of Stonington to fund its share. He verified that service calls are 56% from Groton and 44% from Stonington.

Items discussed included the process of dispatching ambulance, paramedic, police and fire personnel; revenues; the funding requests to the Towns of Groton and Stonington.

The Moderator clarified that the referral titled "Services shared with Stonington" and made on May 6, 2009 incorporates all three of the shared services. She listed them as Mystic & Noank Library, Mystic Ambulance Service and Marine Sewage Disposal.

The vote on \$37,500 carried 27 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Rep. Loughlin.)

Account 10263 - Local Emergency Planning Council

A MOTION for \$1,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Steinford and so voted unanimously.

TOTAL FOR ACCOUNT 1026 Ambulance Services: \$120,451

The Moderator called for a brief recess at 8:45 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 8:55 p.m.

(Rep. Garagliano left during the recess.)

Account 1070 - Insurance & Claims

A MOTION for \$537,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky and was seconded.

In response to Rep. Fairbank, the Manager explained how the estimated budget amount is determined.

The vote on \$537,000 carried unanimously.

ACCOUNT 1071 - Self Funded Plans

A MOTION for \$5,807,952 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Steinford.

Items discussed included employee health insurance; breakdown by department of insurance costs; costs of Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB); employee premiums and co-pays; life insurance.

In response to Rep. Ebbin, the Moderator clarified that the Town Operations total does include all benefit costs as does the Education budget.

Mr. Ackerman explained that the Town is self-insured.

The Moderator requested a chart that breaking down the benefits and costs for employees and retirees for all unions.

The Town Manager stated that the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) on the Town's website provides information on benefit costs for all unions. He clarified that the proposed Town Operations budget came in at a .9% decrease and with the reductions made to date is now at a 1.6% decrease. He mentioned that the Education budget does not provide clearly-defined line items for retiree costs, employee benefits contributions or total benefits.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Ambroise, seconded by Rep. Harrell. The vote on moving the question carried 23 in favor, 4 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Ebbin, Power, Warn and Billing.)

The vote on \$5,807,952 carried unanimously.

Rep. Smuts requested a presentation by Administrative Services to clarify union benefits and exactly what union employees pay for premiums and co-pays. There was consensus to have a presentation at a future meeting before the next budget cycle begins.

A motion to adjourn at 9:30 p.m. to Wednesday May 20, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. was made by Rep. Steinfeld, was seconded, and so voted unanimously.

Budget Session - Wednesday May 20, 2009

Moderator Natalie Billing called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

33 members were present, and a quorum was declared.

The Moderator reported that Reps. Beckwith and Fairbank called to say they are unable to attend this meeting. She mentioned that Rep. Luck had notified the Town Clerk's office of her absence prior to the meeting held on May 18, 2009.

Members Present: Moderator Billing, Rep. Adams, Rep. Ambroise, Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Bauer, Rep. Briggs, Rep. Cerf, Rep. Collins, Rep. Cooper, Rep. Driscoll, Rep. Ebbin, Rep. Evered, Rep. Garagliano, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Luck, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Moukawsher, Rep. Peruzzotti, Rep. Power, Rep. Pratt, Rep. Prochaska, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Tilney and Rep. Warn

Members Absent: Rep. Beckwith, Rep. Fairbank, Rep. Finlayson, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Hellekson, Rep. Metayer, Rep. Newsome and Rep. Steere

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Finance Director Sal Pandolfo, Administrative Services Director Doug Ackerman, Recreation Superintendent Jerry Lokken, Senior Center Supervisor Mary Jo Riley, Shennecossett Golf Course Superintendent Eric Morrison, Golf Professional Todd Goodhue, Deputy Town Clerk Janet Downs, and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

Communications

Moderator Billing stated for the record that she will not be seeking election to the Town Clerk's position.

REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

The Town Manager's Report is being given at this time due to the cancellation of the regular monthly meeting.

1. Financial report

The Town Manager reported that the Unreserved & Undesignated Fund balance as of July 1, 2008 is approximately \$11 million; the General Contingency balance is \$350,000. He noted that a referral was made to the RTM for fourth quarter transfers in the amount of \$314,000; this will be considered at the RTM meeting held on June 17, 2009. The Capital Reserve balance is \$1,779,119.

2. Monthly Briefing

The Town Manager announced that the Town has received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the fifteenth consecutive year. He noted that this award is important to bond rating agencies. He mentioned that Moody's financial reporting service has issued a "negative outlook" on certain governmental borrowing. He stated that the Town is working closely with its financial advisor to retain its rating since the Town will be going out to bond in the fall.

The Manager reported on the status of the State budget. He mentioned that a new legislative act was passed allowing Towns a local option to defer current year revaluation or suspend the next year of phased-in revaluations. He noted that a referral was made to the Town Council Committee of the Whole to consider this option.

In response to Moderator Billing, the Town Manager stated that steps to find savings will have to be taken if the Governor's budget does not pass in order to maintain payroll. He commented that the Connecticut Council of Municipalities (CCM) has submitted proposed legislation that would allow a municipality to amend its budget if the Governor's proposed budget is not approved. He mentioned that the Town could lose \$250,000 in State funds. He cautioned that Town Operations would be impacted and all expenditures would be scrutinized to avoid a deficit. He hopes that the Board of Education would follow the same practice. He noted that due to conservative budgeting practices, the Town should be able to conserve funds by control on expenditures, but the final State budget may impact personnel and involve union concessions.

Rep. Sebastian requested that a financial update on the Senior Center project be provided at the next regular RTM meeting.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Chairman Power read the minutes of the meeting held on April 23, 2009. (Minutes are on file.) Motion to accept the minutes was made by Rep. Power, seconded by Rep. Svencer and so voted unanimously.

Account 1064 - Parks & Recreation

A MOTION for \$2,351,488 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Power, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

Rep. Power announced that Director John Silsby is unable to attend this evening.

Items discussed included the golf course equipment mechanic position; the impracticality of consolidating Golf maintenance and Parks maintenance with Public Works; the special revenue fund; enterprise funding and expenditures.

Finance Director Sal Pandolfo noted that there are 40 special revenue funds that are fully audited but not reflected in the budget. These funds are identified in the CAFR.

Rep. Smuts will not support the motion on the floor. She feels that if 25% of Director Silsby's time is spent overseeing the golf course operations, 25% of his salary should be allocated to the special revenue fund.

Discussion continued about special revenue funds; possible salary increases to employees; the fact that benefit costs are not reflected in the account; the number of management and union positions; union contracts; community event funding.

Administrative Services Director Doug Ackerman confirmed that the United Steelworkers contract expires June 30, 2010 and the Groton Municipal Employee Association (GMEA) contract expires June 30, 2009.

The Town Manager explained that GMEA employees will continue to work under the existing contract but that no wage or benefit changes will be paid until a new agreement is reached.

Rep. Ambrose stated he feels that concessions from the unions are needed.

The Moderator requested that a list of the 40 special revenue funds be provided at the next meeting.

The Manager noted that due to recent budget constraints, a cost allocation analysis has been eliminated. He stated that in order to reallocate items to a special revenue fund documentation is

needed.

In response to Rep. Smuts, Senior Center Supervisor Mary Jo Riley explained the procedure and compensation when staff accompanies a Town-sponsored trip.

Rep. Steinfeld questioned the elimination of funding for the Thames River fireworks.

Mr. Lokken explained that staff is working with Groton Utilities and other agencies to provide services or donations similar to the Esker Point Summer Concert program.

The vote on \$2,351,488 carried 30 in favor, 3 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Loughlin, Smuts and Billing.)

Account 2010 - Shennecossett Golf Course

A MOTION for \$1,173,492 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Power, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

Items discussed included general fund contributions; the impact of weather on revenues; golf cart lease; credit card system; portable toilets; software support; fairway aerator; part-time and full-time employees.

In response to the members, the Manager explained the increase to the regular part-time line item. He reported that two employees are non-union and five employees are steelworkers. He stated that fees pay for employee salaries and benefits, facility insurance and all operating expenses.

The vote on \$1,173,492 carried 31 in favor, 2 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Smuts and Billing.)

Capital Item - Park Improvement Plan

A MOTION for \$76,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Power, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$0 was made by Rep. Warn, seconded by Rep. Smuts.

Rep. Warn will not support spending money on the Poquonnock Plains drainage improvement or shelters for rowing shells. He believes that it is not needed for public safety or education and is not essential during the current economic times. He feels that erecting a permanent storage facility for the rowing shells will adversely affect the aesthetics of the Spicer House property.

Mr. Lokken stated that programs have been impacted due to drainage problems and that savings will occur from the resulting reduction in maintenance. He noted that the shelter will provide protection for the rowing shells and will safeguard the Town's investment.

Rep. Garagliano will not support the amendment. She feels that standing water is a public safety issue for spectators and the neighboring property owners.

Rep. Steinfeld agrees with Rep. Garagliano.

Rep. Power will not support the amendment. He feels that the current economic crisis will increase the use of all parks and facilities this year and that the Town needs to maintain them.

Items discussed included the public safety issue of standing water on the Poquonnock Plains fields; design of the drainage system; current maintenance costs of the fields; the cost of shelter materials; volunteer labor for shelter construction; the irrigation project at Poquonnock Plains; and building on wetland areas.

MOTION TO AMEND the figure to \$10,000 was made by Rep. Cerf, seconded by Rep. Ebbin.

Rep. Cerf stated that she supports \$10,000 for the materials for the rowing shelter. She opposes building on wetlands and feels that it is a constant battle that cannot be won and will not support the drainage system project at Poquonnock Plains.

The Town Manager explained that the property is actually too flat and the fields are not crowned, so the best solution is to install sub-surface drainage pipes that will drain into a catch basin. He noted that this will prevent most occurrences of flooding and only extreme weather conditions will impact the fields. He also noted that Poquonnock Plains Park was not built on wetlands.

Discussion continued on the need for pumps; tying into existing drainage lines on Route 1; crowning all three fields; past remediation work at Poquonnock Plains Park; using tarps to protect rowing shells.

Rep. Garagliano stated that this area is not wetlands and that during the design of the fields, alternative drainage systems were considered but it was decided to pitch the fields towards Route 1 to avoid runoff to abutting properties.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Smuts, seconded by Rep. Harrell. The vote on moving the question carried 27 in favor, 6 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Collins, Ebbin, Moukawsher, Peruzzotti, Power and Warn.)

The vote on the amendment of \$10,000 was defeated 5 in favor, 28 opposed. (In favor: Reps. Cerf, Cooper, Ebbin, Granatosky, Moukawsher.)

The vote on the amendment of \$0 was defeated 3 in favor, 29 opposed, 1 non-voting. (In favor: Reps. Ebbin, Granatosky and Warn. Non-voting: Rep. Evered.)

The vote on \$76,000 carried 29 in favor, 4 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Cooper, Ebbin, Granatosky and Warn.)

*The Moderator called for a brief recess at 9:20.
The meeting resumed at 9:34.
(Reps. Streeter and Tilney left during the recess.)*

Capital Item - Golf Course Improvement Plan

A MOTION for \$50,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Power, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

Items discussed included self-sustaining operations, the need for capital improvement contributions, justification for the tee improvement project.

The vote on \$50,000 carried 29 in favor, 2 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Smuts and Warn.)

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Account 5010 - Capital Reserve Fund

Moderator Billing noted that the committee did not vote on a figure because all CIP projects had not yet come before the full RTM.

A MOTION for \$2,508,000 was made by Moderator Billing, seconded by Rep. Power. The Moderator noted that this figure takes into account the projects that were reduced.

The vote on \$2,508,000 carried unanimously.

Account 1075 - Capital Reserve (contribution)

A MOTION for \$1,163,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

The Moderator stated that this figure reflects changes to the Capital Projects budget made by the Council and approved by the RTM.

The vote on \$1,163,000 carried unanimously.

Account 1076 - Debt Service

A MOTION for \$5,298,100 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Smuts.

Mr. Pandolfo verified that the Town of Groton is ranked 159 out of 169 municipalities for total debt per capita. He noted that Groton's total debt per capita is \$441 compared to the state average of \$2,036. The state median debt per capita is \$1,462.

The vote on \$5,298,100 carried unanimously.

Account 1077 - Contributions to Other Funds

A MOTION for \$110,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

Moderator Billing noted that the RTM could, if it chose, recommend to the Council that it delay the third year of the phase-in revaluation.

The Manager mentioned that these funds are being saved toward the next revaluation that will take place for the Grand List that affects the FYE 2013 budget.

The vote on \$110,000 carried unanimously.

Account 2060 - Mumford Cove

A MOTION for \$20,765 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

The Moderator noted that these funds are for fire protection provided to Mumford Cove by the Noank Fire District.

The vote on \$20,765 carried unanimously.

Account 4010 Groton Sewer District

A MOTION for \$1,163,189 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Svencer and so voted unanimously.

Account 1074 - Contingency

A MOTION for \$350,000 as approved by committee was made by Rep. Granatosky, seconded by Rep. Svencer and so voted unanimously.

H. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 9:53 p.m. was made by Rep. Smuts, seconded by Rep. Harrell.

The vote carried 24 in favor, 7 opposed. (Opposed: Reps. Cerf, Cooper, Ebbin, Granatosky, Luck, Moukawsher and Power.)

Attest:

Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk

Clerk of the RTM

Sally A. Whitney, Assistant Town Clerk